

HICKAM FIELD, NCO HOUSING TYPE 5  
(Hickam Air Force Base, Building Nos. 309, 320, 333, 344, 358, 369,  
470, 471, 484 & 496)  
206 Tenth Street

Honolulu  
Honolulu County  
Hawaii

HABS HI-164-AL  
HI-164-AL

HABS  
HI-164-AL

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

FIELD RECORDS

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street NW  
Washington, DC 20240-0001

## HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

### HICKAM FIELD, NCO HOUSING TYPE 5 (Hickam Air Force Base, Building No. 578)

HABS  
HI-164-AL

HABS No. HI-164-AL

(page 1)

- Location:** 206 Tenth Street  
City and County of Honolulu, Hawaii  
U.S.G.S. Pearl Harbor, Hawaii Quadrangle 1999 (7.5 minute series)  
Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates 04.607940.2360420.
- Significance:** Building 578 is a part of the early development of Hickam Air Force Base as the Army Air Corps expanded its operations in Hawaii before World War II. It was built during the first phase of housing construction, which began in 1937, and was designed with features that adapt it well to the Hawaiian climate.
- Description:** Building 578 is a two-story duplex building with one of its units in a single-story section (578a) of the building, and the other unit in a two-story section (578b). The building is constructed of concrete hollow tile with a painted stucco coating on a concrete wall foundation that has decorative tile vents along the front (southwest) side and large square screened vents with concrete curbs along the rear side. The two-story section has a double pitch hip roof, and the single-story section has a single pitch hip roof. Both sections of roof have open vented eaves and clipped rafter tails and are covered with asphalt shingles. The building has cast stone sills on the exterior of the window openings. At the southeast end is a single story section which is an attached garage (for unit b) with a single-pitch hip roof. The rear wall of this garage has two large openings with cast stone sills, and at the front wall are four geometric openings in a stepped-cross shape set high on the wall. At the northwest end of the building is another attached garage for the other unit. At the rear of the single-story (unit a) section of the building is an original concrete trash can receptacle which has openings in its top for two trash cans, and a walkway of polygonal concrete paving blocks with various finishes – natural concrete and faded stained finishes of green and red. Entries to the building are accessed by concrete stairs with painted iron railings of 2" x 5/8" stock.
- The living areas and bedrooms of the building have pine tongue-and-groove flooring covered with carpet, with painted plaster walls, and v-joint canec panel ceilings in a centered pattern. In these areas are picture rails, set high on the walls (approximately 1/4" from the ceiling) with the narrow gap between the rail and ceiling filled in. The kitchen, bathrooms, and service porch have vinyl tile covered floors and painted plaster ceilings. Typical doors throughout the house are five-panel wood with brass knobs and escutcheon plates. Typical windows are one-over-one double-hung sash with recessed pulls. The front entry door to each unit is an original door of five vertical wood planks, and rear entries are single-light over three-panel wood doors.

**HICKAM FIELD, NCO HOUSING TYPE 5  
(Hickam Air Force Base, Building No. 578)  
HABS No. HI-164-AL (Page 2)**

In the two-story unit (578b), at the top of the stairwell to the second floor, are four fixed-light windows. The u-shaped stairway leading to the second floor is carpeted with the original wood treads visible at the side of the steps. The newel posts are painted wood, about 5½" square, with chamfered corners and an unpainted beveled and stepped cap. The posts have circumferential incised lines near their bases and at about 2/3 of the way to the top. Unpainted wood handrails with ½" square painted iron vertical rails span the distance between the newels. Every other vertical iron rail is formed with a twist.

In both units, each dining room has a telephone niche, original to the building, which is built into the wall. It has an approximate 12" by 21" recess above a shelf for a phone book and a solid panel with a perforated design. In both kitchens, a cabinet remains from a built in ironing board, which has been converted into shelves, and in the kitchen of the single-story section (unit a) is an original built in spice rack. The door from the kitchen to the service porch is a single-light over three-panel wood door.

**Historical Context:** Building 578 was built in 1938. An aerial photo dated September 6, 1938 shows the building substantially complete with its walls and roof (U.S Army Museum Hawaii 1938). A survey of the quarters dated February 13, 1939 lists the Type 5 non-commissioned officers' quarters as "completed" (Hickam Air Force Base History Office 1939). Original plans for Building 578 are dated August 2, 1937 and were prepared under the direction of Howard B. Nurse, the Captain of the Quartermaster Corps at Hickam Field. Building 578 was part of the first phase of housing construction at Hickam Field which began in late 1937 (*Honolulu Star Bulletin* 1937, 1). This building was one of forty-two non-commissioned officers' quarters built under the first phase of housing construction, and one of five Type 5 buildings constructed at Hickam. Construction was to begin after December 1, 1937. The project, which totaled eighty-one quarters for officers and non-commissioned officers, was billed as "one of the most extensive housing projects ever undertaken in the territory" (*Honolulu Star Bulletin* 1937, 1).

Building 578 was part of the development of Hickam Air Base in the late 1930s as the Army Air Corps shifted its operations from Ford Island and utilized the larger area available to them in the new location. The housing planned for the new Air Base was designed "in keeping with the Hawaiian atmosphere and traditions" with some buildings placed on curving streets and amidst extensive landscaping plants, all planned to give a leisurely feeling to the community (Nurse 1938, 10).

The initial housing construction was done by Robert McKee Construction Company of Los Angeles CA. and was finished by July 1939 (*Honolulu Star Bulletin* 1936, 1; and Hunt ca. 1940, 6).

Building 578 has had some alterations since it was constructed. In the two-story section (unit b), a second bathroom has been added on the second floor, above the adjacent unit. In the entry, the original storage closet has been converted into a powder room, and in the kitchen the

**HICKAM FIELD, NCO HOUSING TYPE 5  
(Hickam Air Force Base, Building No. 578)  
HABS No. HI-164-AL (Page 3)**

original built-in spice rack and ironing board have been removed. In both units, the kitchens and the bathrooms have been remodeled with new fixtures, finishes, and cabinets. Original tongue and groove flooring has been covered with carpet and sheet vinyl. The building has been re-roofed with asphalt shingles, original roofing was clay tiles.

For additional information, see HABS HI-164-AP Hickam Field, Hickam Historic Housing.

**Sources:**

Hickam Air Force Base History Office. 1939 "Completion Report, NCO. Qtrs. (Type #5)." Completion report of unit type on file in the Real Estate records. 13 February.

Hickam Air Force Base Plan Files. 1937. Historic plans of unit type 5, plan # 397-2943 and 397-2944. 2 August.

*Honolulu Star Bulletin*. 1936. "\$802,000 Low Bid For New Hickam Units." 28 April.

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Hunt, John A. 1940. "Construction of Hickam Field." *The Quartermaster Review*, November-December.

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J.M. Waller Associates and Mason Architects, Inc. 2003. *Building Preservation Plan of Selected Historic Homes for Hickam Air Force Base*. Honolulu: Hickam Air Force Base.

McAlester, Virginia and Lee. 1996. *A Field Guide to American Houses*. New York: A. Knopf.

Nurse, Captain H. B. 1938. "Hickam Field, The Army's Newest and Largest Airdrome." *Air Corps Newsletter*, 15<sup>th</sup> ABW History Office, Hickam Air Force Base. 1 July.

U.S. Army Museum Hawaii. 1938. Aerial photo # 1445. Ft. DeRussy Archives, Hawaii. 6 September.

**Project Information:** This report was prepared as part of a project to privatize all military housing under the control of the 15 Airlift Wing. Approximately 656 of the 1332 base housing units to be privatized are within the Hickam Historic District. Because the units within the historic district will be altered, a representative unit of each type was selected for preservation; to be restored as part of the Programmatic Agreement (August 2000) for Hickam's Historic District. This report documents the buildings before their restoration. The photographic documentation was undertaken by

**HICKAM FIELD, NCO HOUSING TYPE 5  
(Hickam Air Force Base, Building No. 578)  
HABS No. HI-164-AL (Page 4)**

David Franzen, photographer. Dee Ruzicka, Architectural Historian at Mason Architects, Inc., wrote the written documentation and conducted field work (November 2005 – February 2006) and research for this report.

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HICKAM FIELD, NCO HOUSING TYPE 5  
(Hickam Air Force Base, Building No. 578)  
HABS No. HI-164-AL (Page 5)

Building 578 location map (not to scale)



HICKAM FIELD, NCO HOUSING TYPE 5  
 (Hickam Air Force Base, Building No. 578)  
 HABS No. HI-164-AL (Page 6)

Original drawing of Building 578, dated August 2, 1937, Type 5. From Hickam Air Force Base Plan Files 1937, 397-2944.

